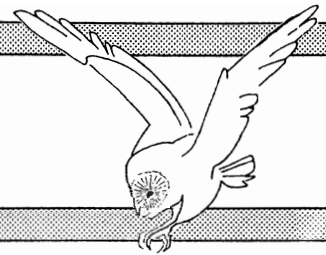


# NATURALLY KENTUCKY

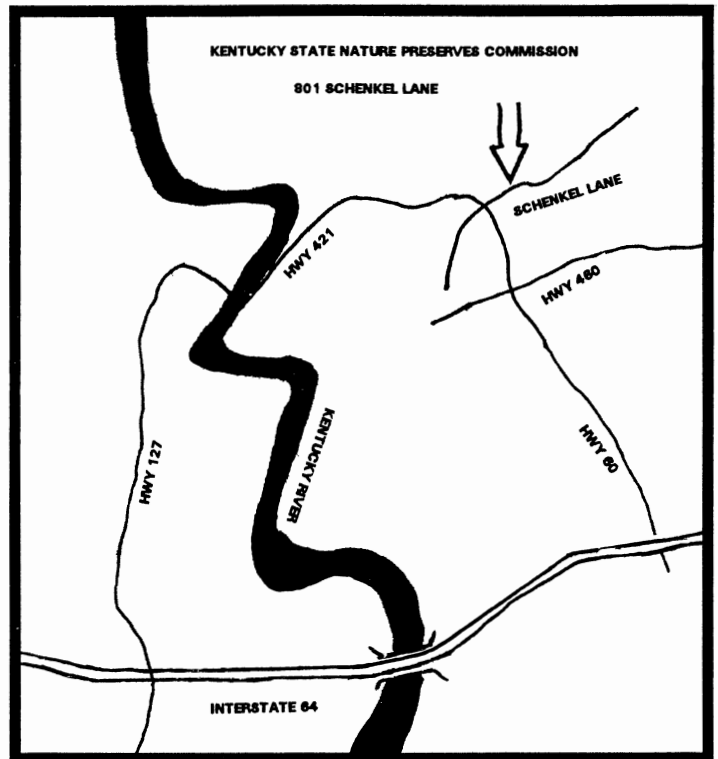


Number 11, March / April / May 1994

## KSNPC MOVES TO NEW LOCATION

As of April 5, 1994 the Commission has a new office located at 801 Schenkel Lane, Frankfort, Kentucky. This long awaited and much needed move came after an intense search for a building that met our needs. The new facility contains 8,460 square feet, and allows our staff the opportunity to continue their efforts without being elbow to elbow. The Commission now has a library, lunchroom, and conference room. In the old building these were all the same room!

We hope that many of you will visit us at our new location.



## NATURAL AREAS REGISTRY PROGRAM: AN UPDATE

by Landon E. McKinney

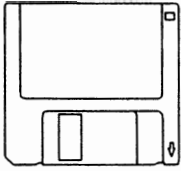
Our Natural Areas Registry Program continues to be an outstanding success. To date, 45 natural areas across the state involving 49 landowners have been registered. This voluntary program is protecting approximately 5,802 acres in 28 counties. These numbers include several recent additions from our efforts in 1993.

We now have our first registered natural areas in Todd County. North Elk Fork Creek Woods owned by Eliza D. Mabry of Shrewsbury, Vermont and South Elk Fork Creek Woods owned by Mrs. Mabry and her sister, Susan H. Menees of Allensville, Kentucky present approximately 78 acres of the oldest growth forest currently known to occur in Todd County. Their woods is dominated by tulip poplar, white and red oak, and white ash some of which reach proportions of 4 feet in dbh (diameter at breast height). These kind ladies have taken great pride in their woods and understand the importance of protecting the integrity of such a rare natural community.

We have also added Adair County to our list of counties containing registered natural areas. Rosson-Mayne Woods State Natural Area includes approximately 230 acres of maturing second-growth forest dominated by beech, tulip poplar, and a variety of oaks. Larry and Helen Mayne own the property and although they currently reside in Slidell, Louisiana, they spend several months out of the year in Columbia, Kentucky where Mrs. Mayne was born and raised. The Maynes treasure an occasional walk through their forest and are quite proud of its natural, untouched beauty.

In Robertson County, Randy and Paula Hunter of Carlisle, Kentucky agreed to register several acres of their property to help protect a significant population of the federally endangered Short's Goldenrod. Randy and Paula have the distinction of being the first landowners to register property previously registered by a former landowner. A change of

*Continued on page 3*



## Data Services Brochure

by Tom Bloom

A brochure detailing Commission data services has been prepared by the Information Systems Manager,

Tom Bloom. Researchers, conservationists, developers, consultants, land managers, educators, and other interested parties can learn about and request the various types of data services available by using this brochure. Development of the brochure culminated a year of work on Commission data services policy by Tom, Ron Cicerello, and Laurel McNeil.

Information on rare and sensitive plants, animals, and other natural features of Kentucky is maintained as part of a computer data management system known as the Kentucky Natural Heritage Program. The data in this system are used by Commission personnel to identify and manage areas of ecological significance. Commission biologists continually gather this information during their field work and from contacts with other Kentucky biologists. As a result, the Kentucky Natural Heritage Program is the most complete and current biological database of its kind available.

The Nature Preserves Commission currently monitors the statuses of almost 600 plant, animal, and natural community elements of Kentucky's natural diversity that are considered rare or endangered. Detailed information about each element occurrence are stored in the Commission's Element Occurrence Database. Taxonomic, biological, and legal information about each element are continually updated. Over 7200 occurrences of these 600 elements are found in this database.

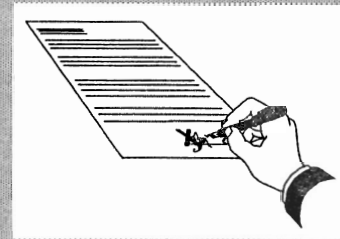
The Managed Area Database contains biological, management, legal, and locational information on over 350 areas in Kentucky, including lands managed for conservation purposes by federal, state, and local governments, private individuals, foundations, and corporations, and other large tracts of publicly managed land.

Data searches and reports can be tailored to fit the needs of most agencies, institutions, and individuals. Computer retrieval capabilities allow a nearly infinite number of data subsets to be assembled. Some of the possible uses of these data are:

--Compliance with endangered species laws & regulations. The databases can be consulted to review permit applications required by endangered species, wetlands, mining or clean water legislation.

- Prevention of disputes over development. Development projects can avoid exemplary natural areas and imperiled species during planning stages, thereby precluding disputes over possible environmental impacts.
- Conservation planning. Critical areas can be identified and protected, and conservation priorities established, on a regional, national, or global basis.
- Management of parks and protected areas. These data can help improve management practices on public and private lands.
- Research and education. Scientific research, especially long-term environmental monitoring, and education can find Heritage data useful.

For a copy of the brochure and more details about standard and custom data services, contact Tom Bloom.



### Blanton Forest Option Purchased

by Robert McCance Jr.

KSNPC purchased an Option to Purchase one of the two Blanton Forest tracts on April 12 from Anna and Harry Neal and Serena Knuckles. The option must be exercised by July 31, 1995 with total payment of \$725,00 for the property. The General Assembly has granted KSNPC \$500,000 in land acquisition funds for next fiscal year, contingent upon a dollar-for-dollar match from private donations. KSNPC will ask several Kentuckians to serve on a voluntary fund raising committee to assist in obtaining donations so that the Option to Purchase the Blanton Forest tract can be exercised and Kentucky's most outstanding old-growth forest may be added to the state nature preserves system. The General Assembly also made our gift account an interest bearing fund, so interest earnings on all donations will accrue to the fund. You most certainly will hear more about this project in future newsletters.

## Jesse Stuart State Nature Preserve

by Kristin Snyder

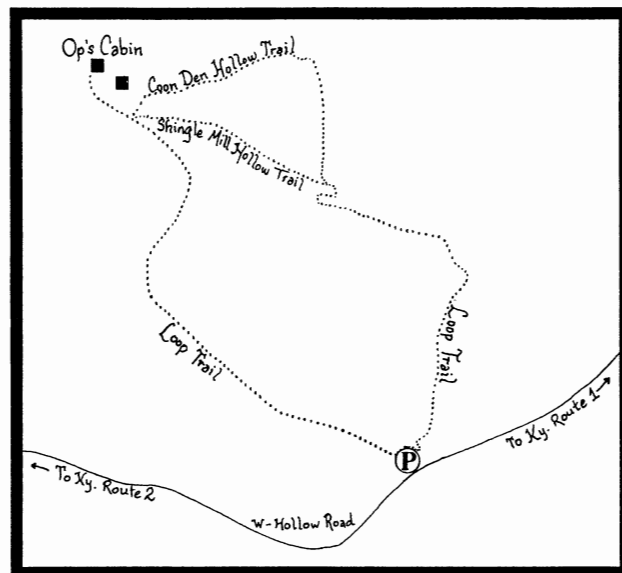
"Now I return to woods that I once knew  
And I lie here upon the leaf-strewn ground  
With ear attuned to hear roots breaking through  
The unadorned and winter-lifeless ground...  
For I do know when earth drinks rain that soon  
New life stirs in the ever restless roots  
Of violet, May-apple and percoon,  
And ears can hear their tender bursting shoots  
As they reach upward for the silver light  
Of blowing wind, of sun and moon and star...  
I know their stems seek life beyond the night  
And nether world where worm and silence are.  
And when I hear them breaking clouds apart,  
God, flower, stem, and dirt excite my brain;  
I hear their little sounds above my heart...  
Great growth to make the earth rejoice again."

(Poem by Jesse Stuart, entitled "New Life" from Kentucky is my Land, published by The Jesse Stuart Foundation, 1980).

Dogwoods and redbuds burst into color as the grasses of the fields raise their brilliant green blades toward the sunlight. In the woods, the change is more subtle with small buds appearing on virtually every stem in sight and new leaves pushing up through the dead leaves on the ground. This is a time to see new life in Kentucky! What better preserve to visit during the greening up of spring than the Jesse Stuart State Nature Preserve in Greenup County?

Located in the north-easternmost county of Kentucky, the 733-acre preserve encompasses many of the ridgetops and much of the valley floor along the length of W-Hollow Road between Kentucky Highways 1 and 2. The preserve became Kentucky's fourth state nature preserve in 1979 when Jesse Stuart donated half of his lands to the state; the remaining acreage was purchased with Land and Water Conservation Fund monies. Mr. Stuart wanted the land preserved in perpetuity for the people of Appalachia and Kentucky with the hope that it would serve as an inspiration to others as it was to him for more than half a century. A quote from Mr. Stuart from the dedication of the preserve reads, "We're very grateful, my wife and I, that youth in future Aprils will know April springs as we have known them, and walk these paths shaded by lilting green and by-passed by rippling streams."

The preserve consists of mowed fields in the bottoms, old fields on the hillsides, and second growth



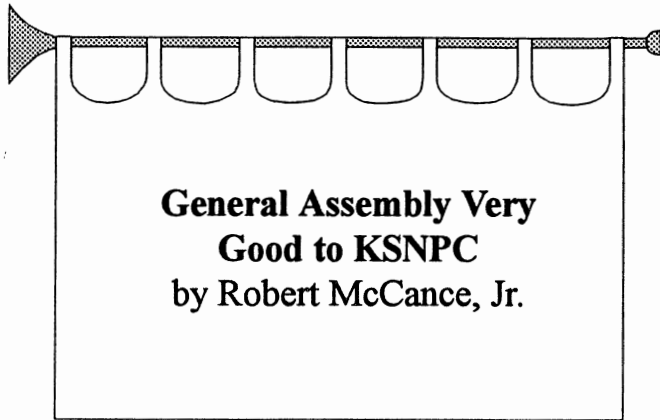
*Trails on Jesse Stuart State Nature Preserve*

oak/hickory forest with young tulip poplar-maple communities in the ravines. The Commission's plans for the preserve include allowing the old fields and young second growth forest to grow to maturity. The preserve's natural, wild state is similar to Jesse Stuart's vision for his land. The bottomland fields along W-Hollow Road are mowed so that the preserve retains some of the pastoral character present when Mr. Stuart owned the land.

Before exploring Stuart's land, visitors may want to read several poems and/or short stories to learn more about the sights and sounds they will encounter and the cultural history surrounding the preserve. One particular poem of interest is entitled "Shingle Mill Symphony", published in his book, The World of Jesse Stuart. This piece was written by Mr. Stuart one Sunday afternoon on a walk near the head of Shingle Mill Hollow.

A moderately strenuous 2.5 mile loop trail leaves the parking lot on W-Hollow Road (see trail map above). At the top of the ridge, the hiker will see Op's Cabin and must decide whether to take Coon Den Hollow trail or Shingle Mill Hollow trail. These two trails join at a small stream crossing and enter (as the loop trail) a section of woods that was once grazed. Over the years, succession has been occurring with hickory and maple trees replacing young tulip-poplars and sassafras. From this young woods, the trail winds into more mature woods and through a seasonally wet area, finally arriving back at the parking lot.

Come out and enjoy the preserve this spring!



KSNPC was actively involved in three pieces of legislation in the 1994 General Assembly, as well as in the Commonwealth's biennial operating budget. HB218 requested by KSNPC and sponsored by Rep. Jim LeMaster passed the Senate on March 7 and became law with the Governor's signature. HB218 made three changes to the income tax refund checkoff program that provides donated money to KSNPC and to the nongame wildlife program of the Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources. The checkoff's name was changed to Kentucky Nature and Wildlife Fund, the \$1 box on the income tax return was changed to a \$2 box, and the accounts were made interest bearing ones so that the interest on the donations also could be used for conservation purposes. Not a single contrary vote was recorded in the House or Senate. KSNPC should receive several thousand dollars per year in additional funds as a result of this bill.

HB349, introduced by Rep. Steve Nunn and cosponsored by Richard Turner and Mark Brown, sought to create a state endangered plant protection law, with KSNPC as the managing agency. Negotiations with numerous lobbyists from agriculture, forestry, development interests, coal, oil and gas and other interests indicated that it would not be possible to pass a strong plant protection bill this year. Rather than lose the opportunity, KSNPC worked with Rep. Nunn to create a bill that only gives KSNPC authority to create an official state list of endangered and threatened plants, with all "protection" aspects removed. This would still help KSNPC convince landowners that they have something of value on their property and that it should be protected. The vast majority of land owners will react positively to this approach. This bill passed the House on March 11, passed the Senate on March 21 and was signed by Governor Jones on April

By far the most important bill to KSNPC was HB368, regarding the Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund Board. This bill provides automatic funding for land acquisition for KSNPC, Parks, Fish & Wildlife Resources, the Wild Rivers Program of the Division of Water, and Forestry, allows these agencies plus universities, local governments and other state agencies to compete for additional funds. With passage, KSNPC expects to receive about \$400,000/year for land acquisition and land management. The decision-making board includes 12 public and private entities, including the KSNPC Director. The major emphasis in promoting this bill was the need to protect Kentucky's natural areas. Having a secure source of funding will mean a great deal to KSNPC. The bill passed the House on March 11 by a 85-5 vote and passed the Senate March 25 by a 28-5 vote. Governor Jones signed it in a ceremony on April 8.

The Governor's operating budget request contained funds for four of the eight additional general fund positions requested by KSNPC, and adequate operating money for all funded positions. It also includes \$500,000 for land acquisition in FY95, contingent upon KSNPC obtaining dollar-for-dollar match in private donations! This is precedent setting for KSNPC, and will require much additional effort. If this passes, we will recruit a committee of concerned Kentuckians to help with the fund raising. The House added \$100,000 in land acquisition funds in FY96. All of the above items were approved by the House/Senate Conference Committee and we have high hopes that all items will be in the final budget when it is approved.

*Continued from page 1*

ownership of any registered natural area automatically nullifies the existing registry. However, after discussing the significance of this site with the Hunters, they kindly agreed to continue in the tradition of the previous owner and help protect this rare plant.

As we look to 1994, we see no reason why the Natural Areas Registry Program cannot continue down the same successful path. The understanding and commitment to help protect important remnants of Kentucky's natural heritage is a source of pride for many landowners and it is that sense of pride and commitment that makes this voluntary program work so well.

## Winter Storms ❄️ ❄️ Mean Spring Cleaning ❄️

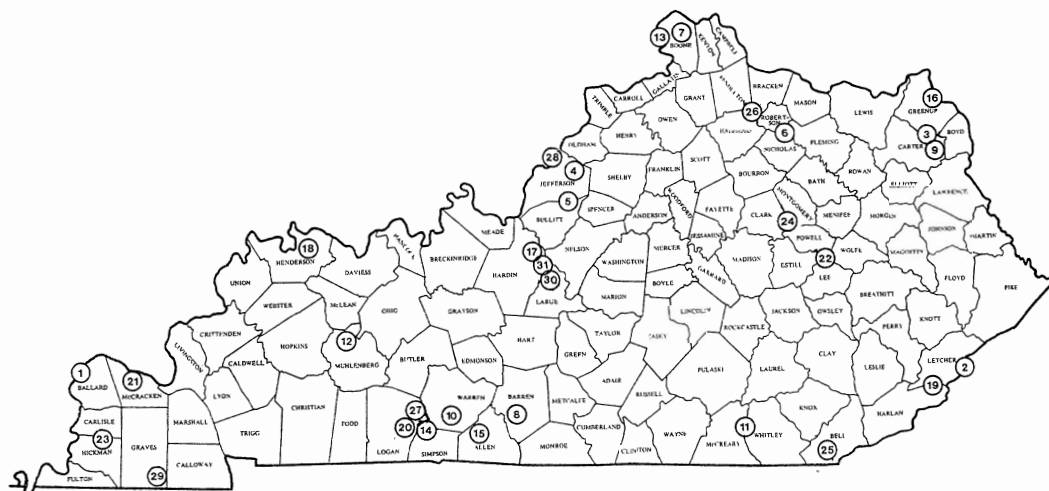
by Joyce Bender

Hard hats may become standard equipment for visitors hiking through many of the state nature preserves during this spring. The winter storms have wreaked havoc in the forests. Tree tops have been snapped by heavy burdens of ice and snow. Whole trees have toppled from the added weight, bringing their neighbors down with them. Broken tree tops don't always snap off cleanly. Some hang on the trunk seemingly by a thread, swaying ominously in the slightest breeze. These "widow makers" pose a serious threat to all who pass beneath them. The tangled mess of limbs and trunks and vines has effectively blocked trail access on preserves from Greenup County to Logan County.

With trails blocked, visitors leave the trail seeking the easiest way around the obstacles. In many cases, erosion results as fragile slopes are trampled and loosened soil falls downslope. We

advise visitors to wait until the trails are cleared so that they avoid potential injury from walking under hanging snags or crawling over fallen trees. This will also help to avoid inadvertent damage to the trails as well. Stewardship staff and volunteers are cleaning up this mess as quickly as possible so that visitors can safely walk their favorite trails.

If your local preserve is one with new holes in the tree canopy, there will be some changes in the composition of the forest floor. If you visit a preserve regularly, you may wish to pick out an interesting tree gap and watch what comes up within the opening during the next few years. The increased light levels will spark new growth and you may discover some plants you've never seen on previous hikes. These gaps are a normal part of forest regeneration. New trees will grow into the space and the light abandoned by the former tenant. There are some species that we'd rather not see taking up occupancy. We will be keeping a close eye on those areas that have the potential to enable exotic weeds to take hold in a new location. If any are spotted, they'll be evicted!



- |                       |                      |                        |                          |
|-----------------------|----------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Axe Lake Swamp      | 9 Cascade Caverns*   | 17 Jim Scudder         | 25 Pine Mountain*        |
| 2 Bad Branch          | 10 Chaney Lake       | 18 John James Audubon* | 26 Quiet Trails          |
| 3 Bat Cave*           | 11 Cumberland Falls* | 19 Kingdom Come*       | 27 Raymond Athey Barrens |
| 4 Beargrass Creek     | 12 Cypress Creek     | 20 Logan County Glade  | 28 Six Mile Island       |
| 5 Blackacre           | 13 Dinsmore Woods    | 21 Metropolis Lake     | 29 Terrapin Creek        |
| 6 Blue Licks*         | 14 Flat Rock Glade   | 22 Natural Bridge*     | 30 Thompson Creek Glades |
| 7 Boone County Cliffs | 15 Goodrum Cave      | 23 Obion Creek         | 31 Vernon-Douglas        |
| 8 Brigadoon           | 16 Jesse Stuart      | 24 Pilot Knob          |                          |

\* Preserve located within State Park

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*The Kentucky State Nature  
Preserves Commission  
is mandated to identify and  
preserve remnants of Kentucky's  
natural heritage in a statewide  
system of nature preserves.*

The Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Cabinet does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, or disability and provides, on request, reasonable accommodations including auxiliary aids and services necessary to afford an individual with a disability an equal opportunity to participate in all services, programs and activities.



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